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# General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

*Official Records*

**19**th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 9 (*continued*)**

**General debate**

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable James Wapakhabulo, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda.

**Mr. Wapakhabulo** (Uganda): On behalf of the Uganda delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to preside over the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, under your able leadership, we shall achieve the objectives of our deliberations. Let me also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the excellent leadership he has provided to the United Nations during a very trying and difficult year.

My country attaches great importance to the centrality of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and in fostering international development cooperation. In that regard, Uganda hopes that this session of the General Assembly will focus on the critical reform of the United Nations to meet the new challenges to multilateralism.

Terrorism has reached epic proportions as a threat to international peace and security. Particularly since 11 September, terrorist organizations have indiscriminately attacked, killed and maimed thousands of innocent civilians in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the Americas. In northern Uganda, a terrorist organization called the Lords Resistance Army has killed hundreds, displaced thousands and abducted children into forced recruitment and sale in slavery.

On 19 August, the terrorists chose to strike at the heart of the United Nations. They attacked the United Nations offices in Baghdad. That callous attack led to the death of innocent Iraqis and many members of the United Nations staff, including the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello. On behalf of the Government and people of Uganda, I wish to express sincere condolences to the Secretary-General and to the bereaved families. We must condemn those acts of terrorism in the strongest terms, and the international community must unite to fight this scourge. Under no circumstances should indiscriminate use of violence be justified.

We must acknowledge that the emergence of new threats such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, combined with genocide and the massive violation of human rights, poses a clear and present challenge to the United Nations.

My country, therefore, shares the view of the Secretary-General that the time has come to examine the fundamental policy issues and structural mechanisms that may be needed to deal with these new challenges. We support his proposal to establish a group of eminent persons to make recommendations regarding the necessary reforms of the Security

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Council and other United Nations institutions and processes.

On the situation in the Middle East, Uganda welcomes the Quartet-led road map for a comprehensive settlement. We support the establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side and in peace with Israel, within secure and recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

I now turn to the Great Lakes region of Africa. We are pleased to note that there have been positive developments as a result of regional and international efforts to build peace and stability in the region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Transitional Government of National Unity has been established in accordance with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the related Pretoria and Luanda Agreements, as well as the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Uganda remains committed to supporting the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including ending the Lendu-Hema inter-ethnic conflict in the Ituri Province. Uganda encouraged the Security Council to establish a robust force of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), under Chapter VII, for peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, resettlement and reintegration of negative forces.

In that regard, Uganda welcomes Security Council resolution 1493 (2003). My country provided Entebbe airbase for logistical support to the European Union-led stabilization force in Bunia in July, 2003. We have also concluded an agreement with MONUC to utilize Entebbe airbase, as well as the Kasese and Arua Airports, for United Nations operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With regard to the situation in Burundi, the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement remains on track, under the regional initiative presided over by President Museveni of Uganda and facilitated by Deputy President Zuma of South Africa. The African Union mission in Burundi has been established. We call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to provide the necessary support for the mission.

On the situation in the Sudan, the Government of Uganda commends the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army for the historic agreement on security arrangements, signed in Naivasha, Kenya, last week. We urge the parties to expedite the negotiation of the remaining issues so that a comprehensive agreement can be reached. The restoration of peace, security and political stability in the Sudan is not only good for the long-suffering people of that country, but also for Africa as a whole.

Uganda particularly welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a high-level meeting, which adopted the Principles on Good-Neighbourly Relations and Cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda on 25 September. Our countries pledged to refrain from interfering directly or indirectly in one another's internal affairs, including making sure that none of the neighbouring countries' territory is used to arm, supply or host any hostile elements or armed groups against the other.

These efforts, aimed at the restoration of peace, security, political stability and good-neighbourliness, are not only good for the Great Lakes region, but also for Africa and indeed the entire international community. Uganda strongly believes that these are necessary pre-conditions for regional integration and the promotion of trade and investment to meet the needs of our people. To that end, Uganda welcomes and supports the forthcoming United Nations conference on the Great Lakes region.

Despite many commitments already made at various international forums, the international community has yet to demonstrate sufficient political will to mobilize adequate resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of globalization for all. The failure of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, held at Cancún, vividly demonstrates this.

Since the Millennium Summit in 2000, important plans of action, declarations and strategies have been agreed upon, inter alia, in Brussels, Doha, Monterrey, Johannesburg and Almaty, for the achievement of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals. The challenge for the international community now is to ensure their full and effective follow-up and implementation. The international

community must accord special priority to the development needs of the landlocked and least developed countries, in order to facilitate their full integration into the global system. Although official development assistance will continue to play an important role in development, Uganda regards trade as the single most important external source of development financing and productivity growth. In this respect, the Doha Development Agenda should ensure that the least developed countries not only have access to markets, but also attain capacity to produce competitively for those markets. We call upon the developed countries to show the necessary flexibility, especially on the question of agricultural subsidies, to allow for the full and timely completion of the comprehensive agenda agreed upon at Doha.

The fifty-seventh United Nations General Assembly endorsed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a home-grown African framework for international development cooperation within the continent. We reiterate the call made last week from this podium by the current Chairman of the African Union, President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique, for strong and effective support for NEPAD by the international community.

In summary, my country has supported the call for collective action against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. We have noted the positive developments in the Great Lakes region and expressed our commitment to building a peaceful and stable region. We have also underscored the need for urgent and effective implementation of agreed upon plans of action to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to assure practical support for NEPAD. Finally, Uganda has reaffirmed its full commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**The President**: I now give the floor to Mr. Rialuth Serge Vohor, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Telecommunications of the Republic of Vanuatu.

**Mr. Vohor** (Vanuatu) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to convey to this Assembly the heartfelt greetings of the Government and people of the Republic of Vanuatu. I should like first of all to sincerely congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the fifty-eight session of the General Assembly. You have assumed the Presidency at an extremely difficult, unsettled and complex time. A series of regrettable events have imperilled the political and ideological authority which is the universal foundation of the United Nations ability to work for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. Given the enormity of the challenges that now face us, my delegation — and I personally — would like to solemnly assure you of our support and full cooperation.

The job of the Secretary-General is one of the most difficult jobs, in particular when the very founding principles of the Organization are being compromised or simply discarded in favour of the interest of some Members. The Government of Vanuatu admires the outstanding authority and clear-sightedness as well as the diplomatic qualities of Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. His wisdom and his persistence have enabled Member States to step up their efforts to make the work of the United Nations more effective and better adapted to the maintenance of peace throughout the world, while keeping the focus on development priorities such as, in particular, the small economies of island States such as Vanuatu.

Quite frankly, we are participating in this meeting somewhat confused about the future of our Organization, since a minority of Powers are influencing the system to advance their own interests and to the detriment of the principles and mandates which are the prerogatives of the United Nations. The United Nations mission, inter alia, is to work for peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations. But the United Nations is being thwarted because of the unilateral initiatives of certain Powers. This is the responsibility of its Members, and this situation has to be addressed in order to restore the central role of the United Nations in conflict settlement.

We cannot conceive of any unilateral action in the future without the risk of paralysing the Organization itself. The decline of order and justice and the various conflicts that are occurring throughout the world are particularly disquieting. If the international system continues to be influenced by certain Powers, the future will remain uncertain, notwithstanding the individual efforts made by Member States and despite the countless resolutions adopted by this Assembly.

In recent years, the international geopolitical environment has been dramatically shaken. Irresponsible actions have unleashed much hatred and

bitterness, which jeopardizes world peace and harmony. The fundamental principles that justified the existence of the United Nations are now being called into question and we are duty-bound explicitly and clearly to redefine the new objectives and to strengthen the founding principles of the United Nations.

Many tragic events have occurred and countless innocent lives have been destroyed. These are the facts of the world today. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the members of the Secretariat who tragically lost their lives in the line of duty and to convey condolences to the United Nations Secretariat as well as to the families of the victims of that brutal and horrendous act. That barbaric and inhuman act of violence saddens us all. I join with previous speakers in condemning that brutal act.

Unfortunately, some of us have contributed to the current situation. A brief overview of past events definitely shows that various world conflicts, wars, famines, droughts, epidemics, poverty and environmental degradation are on the increase. Many developing countries are facing a variety of development difficulties, such as the increase in unemployment that contributes to the degradation of societies. In many cases, the destruction of social and cultural progress, caused by globalization and modernization, has increased feelings of hatred and bitterness. The main outlines for future development have been mapped out but the success of the implementation of this remains dependant on political will, particularly the financial commitments of the industrialized countries. However, I am still optimistic and I trust in your wisdom, Mr. President, to guide us to a better future.

While counter-terrorism and normalization in some countries are on the agenda, we should not divert our attention from the development issues that can undermine the future of developing countries. Considerable resources will be devoted to security questions, when only a tiny share of this amount would be enough to meet the needs of the developing countries.

The environment is another area of concern. We support previous statements by representatives of the island States of the Pacific, and we continue to encourage countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible.

How can we explain to our peoples that certain international obligations are priorities only for the small States, whereas the super-Powers seem hardly to be concerned about them, or are even hostile to them, and yet do not hesitate to impose a series of conditions which contribute to the underdevelopment of small States and which we could describe as political and economic interference?

The unilateral imposition and maintenance of the ban on the sale of products containing kava in Europe is an example of this discriminatory attitude. The European countries involved do not seem to take account of the scientific studies establishing the absence of any link between kava and kidney disease, a link suggested by the health authorities of some European countries.

The threat of economic sanctions by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) against tax havens in the Pacific, while excepting European jurisdictions, leaves no alternative than to accept the conditions imposed without any consideration of the economies concerned. Since our acceptance in principle of the OECD conditions we have received no indication from that organization of any quid pro quo that it can provide in the case of economic loss.

Despite the opposition of the Pacific region to the transportation of nuclear waste in the waters of our region, certain Powers show a complete lack of respect for the sovereignty of the small islands States of the Pacific. It is not only a question of the environment and of protecting our natural resources against any disaster; it is much more a question of ethics. In other words, we regret the complete lack of respect for the small island States of the Pacific as fully fledged members of the international community.

It is generally recognized today that trade is the engine of development. However, like other countries of similar size, Vanuatu is facing certain tariff and non-tariff restrictions which are causing our agricultural products to be inaccessible to, in particular, markets that are often described as free.

Bringing national laws into line with international conventions carries costs that are often disproportionate for the small countries. In almost all cases, national resource constraints, financial as well as technical, are ignored, whereas they must be taken into

account for the success of any programme of action resulting from international commitments.

We must not lose sight of the basic principle of the right to self-determination. We reiterate that the credibility of the United Nations rests on following up the implementation of any reform aimed at recognizing the right of peoples to self-determination, in the context of respect for others and for the United Nations Charter. We therefore applaud the efforts by the Government of Indonesia to open and maintain dialogue with the various social and minority constituents, as well as those in West Papua, in respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

We welcome the positive role and efforts of Australia and New Zealand, after an unprecedented decision by the countries of the region, to restore and maintain order, security and peace in the region, and in particular in the Solomon Islands.

We applaud the French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, for having initiated a summit meeting of heads of State and Government of the South Pacific region, held last July, in order to strengthen our cooperation.

I trust in your wisdom, Mr. President, to make sure that all the theories expounded in the Assembly are followed by concrete, practical action. We have a duty to work collectively through the multilateral institutions to help resolve and overcome the difficulties and challenges that face us. In order to do that, we need to constantly review the very structure of the United Nations. The various unilateral initiatives have highlighted the limits of the current structure which have caused a weakening of the multilateral approach. Many super-Powers are unwilling to share even a part of their authority within the United Nations and seem to prefer the status quo. The principles of democratization and transparency advocated by most Members must be taken into account in the reorganization and in the Organization's decision-making process.

My delegation supports changing the permanent membership of the Security Council to include Japan and a representative of the African continent, of the Middle East and of the Alliance of Small Island States. This reform would give the Organization greater transparency, restore confidence in it and improve international cooperation. My delegation strongly supports the proposals made, and in particular the nomination of a group of leaders representing the various regions and the main categories of economies in order to launch this important proposal. This long awaited review will finally come about.

We need to take this great opportunity to renew and strengthen the United Nations in order to give it the qualities it needs to meet the challenges of our time. Strengthening the cohesion and unity of our great community of nations will be a daunting challenge, one which we are prepared to meet, while offering our complete and unconditional support.

We have aired our concerns in order to stress the injustices and contradictions in the current situation, but we assure the Organization of our support and our commitment to seeing the Organization revitalized, capable of meeting the aspirations of all its Members, whether large or small, rich or poor, strong or weak.

The contradictions of principle, mounting terrorism, human suffering, and the emergence of conflicts in regions that are normally peaceful, combined with the injustices of globalization, are all ingredients for a future catastrophe.

In conclusion, my delegation remains convinced that only a reinvigorated United Nations can contribute in a lasting manner to world peace and security.

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

**Mr. Abdulla** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman, to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We assure you of our readiness to work with you and to contribute sincerely and successfully to the achievement of the noble goals we all seek to accomplish in the service of humanity, and to the safety and security of the international community. I also take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, who presided over the previous session, for his efforts to guarantee the success of the regular session and the special sessions held during the past year.

Let me also acknowledge the tireless and serious efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to promote the leading role of the United Nations in the field of international peace and security.

Once again, we stress the Sultanate of Oman's support for the Organization in its endeavours to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter.

At the outset, I should like to shed some light on the measures taken by my country to develop its important institutions, particularly the judiciary. It is our strong belief that a fair and just judiciary forms the basis for social and economic development. In our contemporary history, the Sultanate of Oman has enabled the judiciary to become the most important means of establishing justice, issuing fair rulings and removing injustices in society, without interference by the Executive branch or by any other branch of Government. That development was endorsed in the constitutional State system enacted by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said through decree 101/96, issued on 6 November 1996.

His Majesty also issued decree 90/99, which enacted the law granting full independence to the judiciary, on 21 November 1999. That law regulates the jurisdiction and the functions of courts of various circuits and at various levels. Moreover, the Supreme Court was established at the top of the judicial pyramid, with competence to standardize legal principles and to address faulty rulings. That was followed by a series of laws organizing various judicial organs, including a law establishing the higher judicial system. Additionally, a draft law on civil and trade procedures has been elaborated.

All of the aforementioned demonstrates His Majesty's interest in guaranteeing the well-being of the Omani citizen and in ensuring that all citizens are familiar with their rights and obligations, which are guaranteed through the right to due process.

In the spirit of continued development and broadened participation by the Omani people in our social and economic development programmes, my country — since the dawn of the blessed renaissance that began in 1970 at the initiative of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said and that has continued throughout the past 33 years — has adopted an approach utilizing the experience and expertise of Omani citizens in the Majlis al-Shura, or Consultative Council, which includes positive aspects of our cultural heritage in the modern development of the Sultanate. Our Consultative Council process has witnessed a qualitative shift and an important transformation in our modern history. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said issued royal instructions in October 2002 expanding the base of popular participation in elections for the Omani Consultative Council by granting every citizen, male or female, over the age of 21, the right to vote and to participate in the next election — scheduled for 4 October — to select the 83 members of the Consultative Council for its fifth session, from 2004 to 2006. That step complements previous steps aimed at developing the Consultative Council. Those important developments in the Sultanate of Oman will create a strong foundation for more development and advancement programmes to benefit the Omani people.

We have followed recent developments in Palestine with grave concern. The Palestinian National Authority responded positively to the international community's demands by accepting the road map — considered the most important document in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict — which embodies the international commitment to establishing an independent, sovereign Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel. Nevertheless, the cycle of violence between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government continues unabated, which may doom the entire peace process, plunging it into a dark abyss from which it could be very difficult to rescue it. Therefore, the Quartet — sponsor of the road map — must shoulder its international responsibilities in that regard.

One might well wonder how peace can be achieved between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples when the Israeli Government has decided in principle to expel President Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority and elected leader of the Palestinian people. One might also ask whether the Government of Israel, a Member State of the United Nations, is honouring its commitments under the Charter. The United Nations must intervene to put an end to that Israeli policy. Israel must respond to the international community's demands and must comply with international resolutions. It must respond positively to international efforts aimed at implementation of the road map, which provides both parties with international guarantees aimed at achieving peace based on the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State on all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Such a solution would give the States in the region a historic opportunity to build a new Middle East. In that connection, we must warn that failure to commit to the establishment of a Palestinian State in conformity with

the road map would create a crisis with catastrophic results.

My country shares with many other Member States the view that peace in the Middle East region will not be true and lasting unless our approach is just and comprehensive. In that connection, the Sultanate of Oman reaffirms its support for Lebanon's right to restore the remaining Sheba'a farms and the Syrian Arab Republic's right to recover the Syrian Golan, occupied on 4 June 1967.

The war against Iraq in the first half of this year was only one link in the chain of wars that have been endured by the Middle East region. That war created a new reality, characterized mainly by the collapse of the former regime, the creation of a huge political and security vacuum and deterioration in basic services for Iraqi society. The continued lack of security in Iraq and the resulting loss of lives — in addition to the destruction of the United Nations Office and the escalation in assassinations — certainly do not help Iraq in this phase of re-establishing the Government and rebuilding the country.

Prompted by our concern about the situation in Iraq, we believe that efforts are needed to enable the Iraqis to assume full responsibility for managing their country. Iraq has an abundance of national experts in every field. These qualified Iraqi cadres are capable of leading the process of restoring security and of rebuilding and fully developing their country. Iraq also possesses enormous economic and human resources that could help it to regain its strength and to play its regional and international roles. Undoubtedly, an active role for the United Nations and its specialized agencies will help us to attain our common objective: unity and territorial integrity for Iraq and prosperity and security for all its people.

Committed to Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, we welcomed the formation of the transitional Governing Council. We believe it essential to deal with that political institution so that we begin to build the right foundations for post-war Iraq — including the provision of basic services and the creation of a political climate conducive to the establishment of a stable political system that will respond to the Iraqi people's wishes — as a prelude to beginning the reconstruction phase.

Stability and the consolidation of security are requirements of all peoples throughout the world. We in the Sultanate of Oman — like all other countries in the Middle East — have been following with interest and optimism the official contacts taking place in various conflict areas. We hope that the contacts and discussions between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates will enable the two countries to arrive at an effective mechanism to settle their dispute. In addition, we appreciate the initiatives by India and Pakistan aimed at starting a dialogue between them. Moreover, my country hopes that the two Koreas and other concerned parties will be able to reach an agreement that addresses the various outstanding issues through constructive dialogue and adherence to international conventions and resolutions. We hope that that part of the world will ultimately achieve peace and coexistence.

We also pay tribute to the peaceful efforts to solve the conflicts in Africa, and call on the international community to assist in developing a fair system to improve economic conditions and a mechanism to relieve the onerous burden of debt on African countries.

International policies have in recent years led to the emergence of various types of terrorist acts. All of us must pause and deeply focus on this phenomenon, which targets people's security and safety. We believe that it has become essential to study in a comprehensive and cooperative manner the root causes underlying this phenomenon. Although we fully support international efforts to combat terrorism by all available means, we must allocate part of the massive financial resources devoted to combating terrorism to help the least developed countries that may be fertile ground for terrorist activities.

There is no doubt that United Nations efforts in the field of disarmament are leading nowhere. They will remain an exercise in futility so long as Member States cannot count on an effective system of collective security safeguards. Without such a system, responsibility for assessments of the level and quality of weapons needed will be subjective and fall solely to individual Governments. This would open the door wide to further arms races, and hinder progress towards disarmament or the reduction of armaments.

While supporting the efforts to limit armaments, the Sultanate of Oman affirms the need to take practical measures in accordance with the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regime of mutual guarantees. My country signed a safeguards agreement with the IAEA on 28 June 2001 at the headquarters of the Agency in Vienna.

My country also believes that it is essential to promote cooperation between States to reduce the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which are the reason for most of the conflicts in the world. My country notes the efforts made by the United Nations to achieve the elimination of all lethal weapons from every corner of the earth and from outer space. My country supports all these efforts and underlines the responsibility of the international Organization for establishing a world order that is more capable of guaranteeing security for all States in a manner that reflects the reality of life in the third millennium. It should be consistent with partnership and with responsibilities, which are essential for the success of all efforts.

This session is being convened at a time of continuous and intertwined development at the world economic, financial and trade levels. Many economies still suffer from economic stagnation and recession.

The Sultanate of Oman appreciates the continued efforts of the International Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization (WTO) to achieve complementarity in their work so that they may confront the challenges that the countries of the world are now facing. These challenges include economic growth, sustainable development, poverty reduction and financial stability and balance.

*Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Since its accession to the World Trade Organization in October 2000, the Sultanate of Oman has taken great strides towards implementing its commitments to the Organization. The Sultanate has introduced many amendments and improvements to its systems, organizations and laws, and has enacted new legislation in conformity with the requirements of the World Trade Organization.

My country has also been following with great interest the ongoing negotiations in the framework of the World Trade Organization with a view to overcoming the obstacles and difficulties impeding its work. Here, we must point an important difference between developing countries and developed countries, in that the latter control the World Intellectual Property Organization agreements and other conventions. Such agreements should not be misused by multinational corporations in a manner that adds to the burdens of the least developed countries in the fields of pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs and technology transfer, which would only exacerbate the obstacles to trade liberalization that the World Trade Organization is trying to overcome. Although the WTO Council of Ministers issued a separate statement on safeguards for patented drugs, aimed at helping developing countries to combat serious and contagious diseases, such a step may not sufficiently protect least developed countries from being forced to bear excessive costs.

The Sultanate of Oman has worked hard at the regional level with its brothers and friends and through regional economic groupings, to enhance the climate for the liberalization of trade and the economy. In the framework of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Sultanate participated in the establishment of the Gulf Customs Union at the beginning of this year. In the framework of the Arab League, we have also pushed forward the deadline for the establishment of a free-trade zone among the Arab States parties to the trade zone agreement to the beginning of January 2005 when full liberalization is expected to occur, opening the door to the free trade of Arab products and paving the way to an Arab common market.

At the local level, my country has continued its efforts to enhance the role of the private sector in the national economy, based on the market economy and free competition and a favourable economic and trade climate that aims at the achievement of a true investment and trade partnership with all countries of the world, in the hope that conditions will be conducive to linking the economy of Oman to the world economy.

Recognizing that the protection of the environment and its resources is a collective responsibility, my country's Government has been active in stimulating the role of Omani society and its effective contribution to this cause. Here, we to reaffirm our commitment to the basic principles adopted at the two earth summits, in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992, and in South Africa, in 2002. We believe that these principles constitute a scientific framework that will guarantee our world partnership and help us to shoulder our collective responsibility for the protection of the environment and its natural resources in the service of sustainable development.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for the efforts and endeavours of the Secretary-General as reflected in his annual report, in which he details the achievements of the United Nations, as well as and the obstacles it faces, and sets out the strategies for the future for this Organization, which embodies the conscience and aspirations of the world. We support the proposals in the Secretary-General's report on developing and restructuring the organs of the United Nations to enable the Organization to reflect current political reality.

The United Nations should remain a true cornerstone of world policy and the main source of international legitimacy, so that countries may appeal to it for the prevention of wars and conflict. This is only possible through the effective pursuit of preventive diplomacy, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of peace, enhancing world cooperation and dialogue among civilizations. This involves working towards resolving the problems of poverty and disease, protecting the environment, combating terrorism and bridging the gap between the rich countries of the North and the poor countries of the South.

Relations between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security should be strengthened through the enhancement of weak regional structures to enable them to archive collective security in a world governed by technology and great population increases.

We believe that the United Nations represents international legitimacy. It is the crucible in which all regional and international efforts meld to realize the hopes and aspirations of our peoples and to confront the real challenges to peace, security and development in all their aspects. This can enhance relations and stability and spread a culture of peace and constructive dialogue among present and future generations to counter the logic of the threat of force or apprehensions about the future.

We hope that this session will be a success so that it may chart a vision for the future that points to ways to serve humanity and renew the Member States' trust in the Organization, total commitment to the implementation of its resolutions and respect for the provisions of the Charter.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya.

**Mr. Musyoka** (Kenya): I am pleased to take this opportunity to address the General Assembly. In the past year both Kenya and the United Nations have been struck by terrorism. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to convey to the Secretary-General, through you, Mr. President, our profound condolences following the heartless and senseless attack on United Nations premises in Baghdad last August. Several United Nations personnel, including Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Iraq, lost their lives during this attack. Mr. Vieira de Mello — an elegant, highly intelligent man — was a calm voice of reason in a sea of troubles. As an assembly of nations, we may have lost his voice, but we should not lose sight of his vision and hopes.

Terrorism has become a disturbing trend. We who live in Kenya know this all too well, as we do not have the option of ignoring the threat of terror. The people of Kenya have been targeted by terrorists on two recent, separate occasions — in 1998 and in 2002. After the 2002 attacks in Mombasa, Kenya's economy was almost brought to its knees because of the various unhelpful measures from without that discouraged travel to our country. As a result, we have been doubly victimized. Against this backdrop, Kenya is totally committed to the fight against terrorism, as we have been subjected to the loss of innocent lives, untold human suffering, loss of property and social and economic hardship. We empathize with others, including the residents of this city and, indeed, the American people, who bore the brunt of unprecedented terror in the September 2001 attack.

We are convinced that this fight can be won only by collective action by the community of nations. We should all address terrorism under the rubric of the United Nations and develop measured, long-term strategies to eliminate terrorism once and for all. Self-interest and unilateral action do not provide a firm basis for a global alliance against terrorism. Only principled international solidarity will defeat terrorism.

My delegation wishes to commend the Secretary-General for the efforts made in enhancing the utilization of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. I note with satisfaction that construction of additional administration and social facilities at the United

Nations Complex at Gigiri has commenced. Further, following the elevation of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) to a fully fledged United Nations programme, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/206, it is the desire of the Government of Kenya to see maximum utilization of those facilities through the hosting of additional meetings and conferences in Nairobi. This will be a clear demonstration of our support for the relevant General Assembly resolutions on this issue.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has contributed to the conflicts raging in many parts of Africa. Kenya has been actively involved in efforts to address this issue and hosts the Nairobi Secretariat on Small Arms and Light Weapons, a regional initiative involving 10 countries of the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. In addition, at the Biennial Meeting of States on small arms and light weapons, held in New York in July 2003, Kenya presented a report on the activities of the Nairobi Secretariat as well as on the measures undertaken by the Government of Kenya at the national level to curb that menace. In this regard, we call upon the international community to provide the requisite resources in our joint effort to fight the proliferation of such arms.

Wars and conflicts continue, and peace, stability and socio-economic development remain elusive, particularly in Africa. Kenya therefore continues to give priority to the prevention, management and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We have spearheaded the Inter-Government Authority on Development (IGAD) peace processes on the conflicts in southern Sudan and in Somalia. Negotiations on a peaceful solution are ongoing in both Naivasha and Nairobi, respectively.

It is with profound satisfaction that we recall the historic event that occurred on 22 September of this year, when the warring parties in the Sudan signed a truly landmark agreement in Naivasha, Kenya. That agreement, which addresses transitional security arrangements, will no doubt provide the basis for a bright and prosperous future for the people of the Sudan. The parties will reconvene in the next two weeks to discuss power sharing, wealth sharing and the status of the three disputed regions of the Sudan. Indeed, the peace process in the Sudan has become irreversible.

I therefore wish to pay tribute to the Government of the Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), IGAD and the international Partners Forum for their concerted efforts and dedication to the peace process. This historic event is a concrete example of multilateralism at work. It is indeed a beacon of hope and a manifestation of the fact that, with goodwill and political will, peace is achievable. I am happy to say that not all news emanating from Africa is all about doom and gloom.

However, in order to consolidate and guarantee a long-lasting peace, it is vital for the international community to play a greater role in the process. In this connection, I would like to urge the United Nations to play a leadership role in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Sudan and to request Member States to support that reconstruction.

On the Somali peace process, I am happy to note that there is encouraging progress in the negotiations, and we are hopeful that there will be a fruitful outcome. Just two weeks ago, representatives adopted the charter, and elections will soon be held. Kenya therefore encourages the parties concerned to consolidate and take advantage of the gains made so far. We emphasize that the peace process should be all-inclusive, and we call upon the President of the Transitional National Government, Mr. Abdikassim, to return to the negotiating table in Nairobi and on the other faction leaders to accept his participation. By the same token, we call upon our partners and the international community to continue supporting both peace processes.

We commend the efforts made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to restore normalcy in Liberia. While appreciating the important role the United Nations plays in consolidating peace and stability in the world, Kenya advocates greater United Nations participation in African initiatives, such as the peace processes led by IGAD and ECOWAS.

We are concerned at the continuing deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. Kenya notes with regret that a lasting solution to the question of Palestine remains elusive despite the various initiatives undertaken and efforts made to address the problem. We should not lose sight of the objective of establishing a viable Palestinian State, as envisaged in

United Nations resolutions. Similarly, it should be recalled that, in order to ensure a durable solution to the conflict, it is important to take full account of the right of Israel to exist within safe and secure borders. We therefore reiterate our call to the parties to the conflict, as well as to the other players involved, to exercise restraint and to give priority to dialogue.

Another area of concern in the Middle East is Iraq. The people of that country have yet to find peace and stability, without which any hope of national reconstruction will be in vain. It is, however, encouraging to observe that the international community now shares the common view that the United Nations should play a greater role in rebuilding that country. It is our hope that that consensus will be translated into action soon.

For peace and stability to flourish, good governance is a necessity. This challenge is one that Kenya has been able to meet. In December 2002, Kenya saw a historic moment, when we held general elections which were universally recognized as free, fair and, indeed, democratic. Every citizen of Kenya was provided an opportunity to have a voice in determining his or her Government, successful and strong evidence that Africans can and will embrace democracy and that we, the proud descendants of the oldest civilizations in history, are ready to determine our destiny. I would like to recall the words of a great son of Africa, the late Patrice Lumumba:

> "History will one day have its say ... Africa will write its own history, and it will be to the north and to the south of the Sahara, a history of glory and dignity".

We are prepared as a country, under the leadership of President Mwai Kibaki, to play our part in promoting development and democracy.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) commands the support of all of us and, if implemented in a holistic manner, it will guarantee sustainable development for the African continent. NEPAD is a symbol of renewed commitment by the region's States, and should thus be accorded the necessary support by the international community. We appreciate the warm reception accorded to NEPAD by both the United Nations and our development partners. We are committed to the successful implementation of this arrangement. For its part, Kenya, which is a member of the Steering Committee, has established a National NEPAD Secretariat and will host a regional summit on NEPAD for East Africa, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa next month to take stock of its implementation.

The United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, particularly the Rio Summit, the Millennium Summit, the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, the Monterrey Conference and, finally, the Johannesburg Summit, have equipped us with numerous ideas and commitments to tackle the problems facing the world today. Despite this wealth of ideas and commitments, we have continued to slip backwards in the fight against poverty, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and hunger.

My message to all of us today is that we must recommit ourselves; let us implement what we have agreed on to make the world a better place for all. We welcome the adoption by the Assembly of resolution 57/270 B on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the implementation of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. We urge all stakeholders identified in this resolution to play their part to ensure its full and speedy implementation.

The majority of African countries are among the poorest in the world. The situation has been compounded by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has ravaged the continent and reversed the socio-economic gains made since independence. To counter the ravages of the pandemic, the Kenya Government has put in place various measures to curb further spread of HIV/AIDS. As a result of these efforts, prevalence rates have been significantly reduced in the last four years. However, much still needs to be done in this area.

Last month, Kenya hosted the thirteenth International Conference on AIDS and Sexually-Transmitted Diseases. This forum brought together over 6,000 delegates from all over the world to discuss urgent measures that we all must take to combat the pandemic. We call upon the international community to intensify its efforts in fighting the scourge by, among others things, the provision of adequate financial resources, as well as enhanced access to antiretroviral drugs, for those infected.

We welcome the recent agreement arrived at in the World Trade Organization (WTO) enabling developing countries to import HIV/AIDS generic drugs. We urge developed countries and drug manufacturers to respect the decision of the WTO and

to cooperate with developing countries to facilitate accessibility of antiretroviral drugs to all HIV/AIDS sufferers.

Kenya regrets the collapse of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún last month. However, we in the developing world are ready to continue with negotiations as long as our partners are prepared to work with us as equal players.

In conclusion, I wish to extend to Assembly President Mr. Julian Hunte, on behalf of my delegation, congratulations on his unanimous election as President of the fifty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly.

The challenges that I have addressed today have no respect for boundaries or sovereignty or, indeed, historical realities. They represent a collective problem for this Assembly and one that we must face together as an international organization. It is my hope that the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly will address with courage the issues before the international community. I wish to assure the Assembly President of the full support of the Kenyan delegation.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on Mr. Seyoum Mesfin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

**Mr. Mesfin** (Ethiopia): It gives me great pleasure to extend to Julian Hunte warm congratulations on his election as President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I wish also to take this opportunity to commend his predecessor for his invaluable contribution to the success of the fifty-seventh session of the Assembly. Allow me also to extend my sincere appreciation to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the great effort he has been making to maintain the integrity of the United Nations in this difficult period in the history of the Organization. I wish also to commend the Secretary-General for his invaluable contribution in enhancing humanitarian assistance, fostering development cooperation and strengthening our esteemed Organization.

I wish to preface my brief statement with sincere appreciation for all those who have responded with generous support to assist the people of Ethiopia to overcome the consequences of a devastating and extended drought, which put at risk more than a dozen million of our compatriots. The responses from the United Nations, the United States, the European Union and many others were indeed as timely, as they were generous. The people of Ethiopia are grateful for this demonstration of solidarity.

We in Ethiopia are the first to realize that this state of affairs in our country cannot continue. Our people cannot be allowed to be vulnerable to famine every other year because of drought. It is a must for us, and a matter of national survival and dignity, to ensure food security for our people in the shortest time possible. But this can be done only when our people are given respite for peace and are able to fully concentrate on economic development.

We have come to be convinced that, for our strategy on economic development and good governance to succeed, we need to enhance our capacity in human resources development and institution-building. It is imperative for us to focus on capacity-building and to make it a priority.

It has also been found critical that we expand further our decentralization exercise, with a view to empowering our people at the grass-roots level.

We have embarked on a fundamental shift in the country's foreign and national security policy, focusing on the internal needs of our country and on ensuring its viability, which can be realized only through rapid economic development and the nurturing of democratic governance.

Like many countries in our continent, and perhaps more than most, Ethiopia has suffered at length as the result of conflict and war and its consequences. The internal causes of the absence of peace and tranquillity in our country were removed, once and for all, when the military dictatorship came to an end and when we embarked upon laying the foundations for a democratic and just society 12 years ago.

Until 1998, Ethiopia made great progress that, if continued, would certainly have made us far more prepared to withstand the consequences of the extended drought last year and the year before. But the Assembly recalls what befell Ethiopia in 1998. The strong momentum we had managed to create for rapid economic development was pushed off track by the aggression we suffered in May 1998, which took us two years to reverse. Having reversed the aggression, Ethiopia showed its unflinching respect for the principles of international law by taking the lead in

ensuring the signing of the Algiers Agreement. With little hesitation, Ethiopia withdrew from territory that it had seized in a counteroffensive to expel the invading army from its territory and to make room for the Temporary Security Zone, to which the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was subsequently deployed.

We have now come to the point at which the United Nations will have to take greater interest to ensure that the hopes and promises engendered by the Algiers Agreement are fulfilled. The Agreement was designed to lead to durable peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It was not meant to punish the victim of aggression. This is why Ethiopia has felt it necessary to call on the Security Council to help us achieve the hopes implicit in the Algiers Agreement.

Ethiopia is committed always to being a peaceful country. We have always been second to none in our commitment to the principles of international law. This will remain one of our people's distinguishing features. This is a tradition we will continue to maintain and foster. This is also how we intend to tackle the present complications in the implementation of the Algiers Agreement.

Few regions of the world have suffered as a result of conflict as much as the Horn of Africa. We in Ethiopia are committed, along with others in our subregion, to change this existing reality. With the progress that continues to be made in the peace process to resolve the conflict in Somalia, we are today more hopeful than ever that the long saga of the Somali people might be about to end.

I wish to seize this opportunity to thank the European Union, the United Nations and others for the invaluable assistance that they have continued to give to ensure the success of the peace process in Somalia. Little progress could have been made without that support. The frontline countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will need even greater support for the success of the peace process in Somalia, which is now entering into its most critical phase.

We are also deeply encouraged by the peace process aimed at resolving the conflict in the Sudan, which has also entered into a very delicate phase. The parties deserve to be commended for the great resolve they are demonstrating in addressing the common challenges they are facing. The Framework Agreement on Security Arrangements for the Interim Period, signed on 25 September between the two parties, represents a major breakthrough, which will no doubt help lay the foundation for more progress in other areas. We would like to thank all those, the United States Government in particular, who have made contributions to the progress that has been made in the peace process in the Sudan.

These developments show that the situation in the Horn of Africa is not hopeless. The challenges we are facing are nonetheless formidable. We in Ethiopia are determined to contribute more than our share to assist in the regeneration of our subregion, which has also been the target of international terrorism. The achievement of peace and national reconciliation in Somalia is extremely critical in the fight against this scourge as well. That is why all those who are willing to join in the fight against international terrorism should be automatically supportive of the peace effort by IGAD in Somalia.

As a country from a region that has lost much and has stayed far behind in development because of the absence of peace, Ethiopia feels solidarity with all the peoples of the Middle East who yearn for peace, security and justice. As a people very close to the Middle East, Ethiopia has close affinity with the people of Palestine and with the people of Israel. It is our hope that the suffering of both will end soon and that the hope held up by the road map will be realized.

The hope we have for economic development and the prospect we see for peace in our subregion can hardly be made a reality without international conditions that are conducive to countries such as Ethiopia to make progress.

In this respect, the general situation is not very promising. Under the circumstances, without greater commitment by the developed world to the rapid economic development of Africa, countries such as Ethiopia will hardly be in a position to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

There is, without any doubt, an urgent need for increasing the quality and the level of assistance by the developed world to Africa. There is a critical need for addressing the problems surrounding issues related to subsidies and the access of products from African countries to developed countries' markets. International solidarity and the promotion of our

mutual interests make it imperative that a lasting solution is found to the debt burden.

Africa is passing through a very difficult and critical period. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is wreaking havoc in the continent. As is now widely acknowledged, this is not simply a health crisis. The pandemic is also an economic, security and social crisis with broad and potentially devastating implications. Hence, this is a challenge not only for Africa, but also for the entire world.

But Africa is not asking to be rescued by the international community without discharging its own responsibilities. What Africa is asking is to be given a break, as many have been given in the past at some point in their history. In fact, what is involved here are mutual obligations. This is the overriding principle upon which the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is based. It is Ethiopia's hope that NEPAD will be taken more seriously as a framework for expanding the cooperation between Africa and the developed countries in the interest of ensuring success in Africa's fight for prosperity and development, and for a safe, peaceful and truly globalized world.

The United Nations is facing today one of the most difficult periods in its close to 60 years of history. Its legitimacy and credibility is being increasingly questioned. Many have also questioned its effectiveness. Not a few have also wondered on many occasions whether they have always been assisted by the Organization in nurturing and fostering peace. My own country has also been disappointed in the past. But we have never abandoned hope in the United Nations or in multilateralism, because we know, at the end of the day, that the United Nations is indispensable. That is why Ethiopia will always be committed to the United Nations and its ideals.

It is our hope that all Member States, big and small, will be fully committed to the United Nations and its ideals and carry out the long overdue reform of the Organization with a view to making it more effective.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Antanas Valionis, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

**Mr. Valionis** (Lithuania): I would like first of all to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Jan Kavan for his work as President of the General Assembly at its previous session. We appreciate the knowledge and skilful leadership of the current President, Mr. Julian R. Hunte of Saint Lucia, and wish him a year of constructive dialogue and cooperation.

This year was one of shocking news and human tragedy. We lost a noble man and a distinguished diplomat, our friend Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and many others who happened to be on duty at the United Nations premises on that tragic day in Baghdad. More recently, we paid a final tribute to Ms. Anna Lindh, the late Swedish Foreign Minister and our good friend, who fell victim to another act of human insanity. We grieve for those lost, but we also remember their work and unfinished missions.

Iraq is one such example of unfinished business. The restoration of sovereignty and the implementation of a political process leading to the establishment of a fully representative Government through democratic elections is our primary goal. State-building, however, is not an overnight process. Only through coordinated effort and close international cooperation can we expect to rebuild a free and peaceful Iraq. The United Nations, with its unique experience and legitimacy, is essential to efforts to help the Iraqi people recover their sovereignty. In Iraq, the first signs of recovery are already visible, as demonstrated by the appointment of a Governing Council and the formation of a preparatory constitutional committee. These positive developments should be supported and encouraged. Thus we look forward to the forthcoming Madrid conference, which will address many issues important to Iraq's future. International support is indispensable, and sometimes even critical, to people coping with the legacy of a fallen dictatorship.

The current setbacks in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians must not prevent the implementation of the road map. The vision of two States living side by side in peace and prosperity remains the only viable option.

The real strength of our power as an international community continues to lie in our resolve to deal collectively with critical issues. The recent report of the Secretary-General posed hard questions. We need to find consensus on the conceptual and political framework for the operation of the United Nations in

the coming decades. Lithuania firmly supports the United Nations as it pursues the goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We share the view that the multilateral institutions must be updated and reinforced. It is absolutely essential that the United Nations and its principal organs be seen as relevant and effective. Lithuania is ready to contribute to the goal of building an international order based on effective multilateral institutions and on the fundamental goals of the United Nations Charter.

Lasting peace is our collective responsibility. The Security Council must be able to take a leadership role in maintaining international peace and security. Thus Lithuania supports substantial reform to ensure a better and more equitable representation in both categories, permanent and non-permanent, through the inclusion of Germany and Japan, as well as certain other leading countries from other regions.

Lithuania welcomes the intention of the Secretary-General to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to address responses to current challenges. The European Convention, which prepared the draft European Constitution, is a good example of how such fundamental policy questions could be dealt with.

Regrettably, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continue to be on the list of our chief security concerns. The Thessaloniki European Council Declaration on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the European Union's (EU) basic principles and action plan against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are well-defined responses. Lithuania associates itself with them and will contribute to their implementation. I should also like to recall the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which is yet another result of multilateral efforts and is worthy of global universalization.

Global stability also requires regional efforts. In this context, I would like to note with satisfaction that next year Lithuania and other Central and Eastern European countries will join the EU and NATO, thus expanding the zone of stability and democracy in Europe. Moreover, our accession will have an important positive effect on the nations at the new borders of the EU and NATO. Lithuania is determined to continue its good-neighbourly policies and to develop closer relations with its new EU neighbours. I should also like to draw attention to Baltic-Caucasus regional cooperation, which is already developing a number of successful initiatives.

We are witnessing the willingness to adopt more effective measures to combat terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Invariably, more conventional challenges can be dealt with by transparency and confidence-building activities. As a new State party to the Ottawa Convention, Lithuania is committed to contributing practically to its implementation and promotion. We feel that it is increasingly important to facilitate regional dialogue and action that contributes to the abolition of anti-personnel mines and the clearing up of old unexploded ordnance. We have already started working with interested parties in that respect.

Democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are undoubtedly the most important in our system of values. In view of the process of globalization, securing this system is a great challenge. Such global afflictions as poverty, hunger, unsustainable development, disastrous massive pandemics and grave violations of human rights raise before us the vital task of standing together in order to secure the future of our children.

Stable conditions for peace cannot be created without addressing poverty and eradicating social exclusion. We should, therefore, put all our efforts towards achieving the goals that we agreed to in the Millennium Declaration. Lithuania, as a future member of the European Union, is also assuming its responsibilities as an emerging donor in this regard.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea.

**Sir Rabbie Namaliu** (Papua New Guinea): Let me from the outset congratulate the President of this fifty-eighth General Assembly on his election. I have no doubt that his election by the international community is a recognition of his vast diplomatic skills and leadership qualities. His election is also recognition of the coming of age of small island States. I also wish to thank his predecessor Mr. Jan Kavan for his stewardship of the work of the fifty-seventh General Assembly.

Please allow me also to pay tribute to the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan and his staff for their dedication and commitment in dealing with many pressing international issues that confront us today.

I join others delegations in expressing our Government's sincere condolences to the families of the United Nations staff, including the late Sergio Vieira de Mello, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who lost their lives in Baghdad on 16 August 2003.

The attacks were barbaric and against the principles of freedom, democracy and peace as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. They must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

In pursuit of our commitments to combat international terrorism, I am happy to report that Papua New Guinea has substantially complied with United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

Our Parliament recently ratified many of the conventions and protocols to combat global terrorism. Yesterday, I personally deposited four conventions with the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General.

Having fulfilled these requirements, Papua New Guinea is now faced with resource constraints and other challenges to implementing the treaty obligations. This situation is further exacerbated by other threats, such as illicit drug trafficking, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, smuggling of humans and money-laundering.

In the Pacific Islands region, we have taken positive initiatives to collectively deal with these threats. The Nasonini and Biketawa Declarations agreed to by the Pacific Islands Forum leaders provide the framework for cooperation in dealing with these threats.

In the wider Asia-Pacific Region, the Southwest Pacific Dialogue has met twice, in addition to the annual Bali security meetings, to discuss political and security issues facing the region. The Dialogue partners include Indonesia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

Whilst issues of greater political and security risks are of concern to us, the real threat at this stage is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Small arms and light weapons have not only destabilized regions, sparked, fuelled and prolonged conflicts but also obstructed relief programmes, undermined peace initiatives, exacerbated human rights abuses, hampered development and fostered a culture of violence. There are no international treaties or other legal instruments for dealing effectively with this category of weapons.

In this context, Papua New Guinea welcomes the call for the immediate and full implementation of the 2001 Plan of Action on small arms aimed at curbing and eradicating the flow of small arms and light weapons.

Let me place this in the context of the crisis in our province of Bougainville where the proliferation of small arms and light weapons contributed to the prolonging of the conflict in the province.

With regard to progress in Bougainville, we have completed the second stage of the arms disposal programme, which has been verified by the United Nations. The regional Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) has now been wound down and replaced by the Bougainville Transition Team (BTT). With the help of the United Nations the Team will maintain logistical support for the peace process and assist in other operational areas.

I would also like to inform this Assembly that the peace process under the Bougainville Agreement has reached the crucial third stage under the constitutional amendments agreed to by the Papua New Guinea National Parliament. While there are delays, every necessary step is being taken by all parties concerned to ensure that the momentum built to date is not being unduly hampered.

My Government therefore seeks the understanding of the international community, especially the members of the Security Council, to help us fully achieve all tasks agreed to under the Bougainville Peace Agreement. This will signal a win-win story for all, the United Nations, our Government and the people of Bougainville.

I express our Government's profound appreciation to the Secretary-General for the invaluable efforts of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), including those of Ambassador Noel Sinclair.

I also acknowledge and thank our regional neighbours — Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon

Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, for their immense contribution to the peace process.

With regard to the conflict in the Solomon Islands, the package of assistance developed and agreed to by the Pacific Islands foreign ministers and later adopted at the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, last month has helped restore peace and normalcy in that country. It was undertaken at the request of the Government of the Solomon Islands under the Biketawa Declaration.

The Australian-led operation includes the deployment of both civilian police and armed peacekeepers from many of the Pacific island member States, including my own. The cooperation among member States underlines the strength of regional peacekeeping, if done properly.

On the Israeli and Palestinian issue, we were encouraged by the general positive signs of progress towards resolving and securing peace based on the United States-led road map. However, this has deteriorated in recent weeks. We call upon all parties involved to exercise maximum restraint and work towards the peaceful settlement of this crisis.

We are pleased that the Quartet has recently convened in New York to review the road map. We look forward to their strong leadership in assisting to resolve this long outstanding issue. Fighting and violence will not resolve the conflict. We join the international community's call for both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to make renewed efforts at the negotiating table, to cease all hostilities by both sides and to find a permanent solution to the problem.

Our belief is that diplomacy is the only means by which States may join as partners and co-operate in bringing about changes which promote peace, economic and social progress for all people, both in principle and, more importantly, in practice.

We believe that this too should apply to the situation in Iraq. We support the work being done in the Security Council to adopt a new resolution on a role of the United Nations that would provide a framework for the widest possible participation of United Nations Member States in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Regarding United Nations reforms, Papua New Guinea commends the leadership demonstrated by the Secretary-General in the current work being done to reform the main organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and the Security Council.

We support the expansion of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent membership categories. Reforms should take into account the interests of both developed and developing countries.

All permanent members in an expanded Council should have similar rights and privileges. However, the use of the veto power should be curtailed and applied only to Chapter VII issues. In doing so, we must move swiftly to complete the reforms of the United Nations system — including the Security Council — so we can restore the capacity of the multilateral system to better serve us all.

Papua New Guinea fully endorses the recent Declarations and Plans of Action of the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg Conferences. We are resolved to meet the challenges of poverty eradication; hunger; illiteracy; environmental degradation; climate change; and HIV/AIDS, malaria and other preventable diseases. We are also committed to addressing issues of good governance. It is the desire of the Government of Papua New Guinea to incorporate the Millennium Development Goals into our national development priorities. We are in the process of adopting the medium-term development strategy, which is aimed at redirecting development to the rural areas where the majority of our people live. We encourage the international community — including all stakeholders in developed and developing countries — to continue to make resources available to fully implement those Declarations and Plans of Action.

Like other developing member States of the Pacific Islands Forum, Papua New Guinea is firmly committed to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. We fully support its 10-year review process, which will take place at the international meeting to be held in Mauritius in August 2004. We call upon our regional and international development partners to support the review process, as was the case with the recent conferences of the least developed and landlocked developing countries.

The recent breakdown in the World Trade Organization negotiations in Cancún is of great concern to us all. However, that should not be a barrier to further negotiations to arrive at a fair and equitable

arrangement that provides for the interests of all nations.

On a more targeted front, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries — of which Papua New Guinea is a member — are now negotiating with the European Union for a possible economic partnership agreement. It is important that the main objective be the eradication of poverty, and therefore that trade preferences enjoyed by ACP countries under successive Lomé Conventions and under the current Cotonou Agreements not be eroded.

The small island developing States of the Pacific region are among the custodians of the largest ocean space. The Pacific Ocean is rich in natural marine resources. The recent Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, again reaffirmed the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy, which aims to ensure the future sustainable use of our oceans and their resources by our island communities, in close cooperation with our development partners.

The countries of the region, however, have limited human, financial and technological capacities to control, manage and secure those resources for the benefit of our current and future generations. In protecting our vast marine resources, the Pacific Islands Forum leaders reiterate their serious concerns about the shipment of radioactive materials through the region. They also call upon States engaged in those activities to accept full responsibility and liability for compensation for any damage that may result, directly or indirectly, from the transportation of radioactive material through the region. The two accidents that happened in the Atlantic Ocean last year underline the reality of our concerns.

Papua New Guinea, together with other small island developing States, continues to express deep concerns about the adverse impact of climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise, particularly on the small, low-lying islands that are already experiencing extreme hardships. We will continue to stress the urgent need for developed countries to exert strong leadership in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Papua New Guinea has signed and ratified both the United Nations Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol paves the way forward for developed countries to fulfil their obligations under the Climate Change Convention. We believe that the larger developing countries also have an obligation to take concrete actions in reducing their gas emissions. We welcome the support of Japan, the European Community and China for the Kyoto Protocol. We urge the United States, the Russian Federation and Australia to join the global efforts aimed at addressing that issue, including ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Papua New Guinea is also not immune to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Tuberculosis and malaria are again on the rise, so there is an urgent need to find preventive measures for those diseases. I am, however, pleased to report that the Papua New Guinea Parliament this year enacted legislation aimed at dealing with the scourge by assisting with prevention and awareness programmes to reduce and limit the spread of HIV/AIDS, which threatens the lives of our people, particularly mothers and children. In that regard, we thank Australia for its substantial assistance. We also acknowledge continuing support from other development partners, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Health Organization.

We also support the work of the United Nations in relation to the protection and advancement of the rights of women and children. While we have ratified the appropriate conventions, we realize that we must do more. We acknowledge the support being provided by our development partners, including United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF.

Papua New Guinea fully concurs with the calls by the international community to reform and restructure the charters and mandates of the two Bretton Woods institutions. Their lending policies should be made more lenient and flexible with regard to assisting developing countries in their developmental efforts.

Among the greatest achievements of the United Nations is the process of decolonization. But that process will not be completed — as it must be — until the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories have exercised their inalienable right to self-determination. The United Nations should continue to monitor developments in New Caledonia, Tokelau and the other 14 Non-Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations decolonization list on a case-by-case basis. Neither size, remoteness nor population density should

be allowed to limit the exercise of this inalienable right. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting held in Auckland last month once again reaffirmed its support for that principle.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Papua New Guinea's firm commitment to the timeless principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We also strongly advocate that it is Papua New Guinea's position that diplomacy, through positive dialogue, is the key to addressing these challenges.

Finally, Papua New Guinea believes that a greater challenge for all United Nations Member States is to work together as genuine partners. That will serve as an effective tool for implementing our collective goal: to create a better and more secure world, both today and for future generations.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Marjatta Rasi, chairperson of the delegation of the Republic of Finland.

**Ms. Rasi** (Finland): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Multilateralism and the United Nations have gone through a trying time since the last session of the General Assembly began. At the same time that multilateralism has been challenged by unilateral actions, it has been proved that multilateralism and multilateral cooperation — as well as the United Nations — are needed, perhaps more than ever before. The discussions at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Cancún also point to the need for open and broad discussions on preserving a multilateral trading system based on mutually agreed rules.

International cooperation is needed in crisis management and prevention, in disarmament and arms control, in promoting human rights and international law in general, in enhancing sustainable development, in strengthening global governance with regard to environmental issues and in creating coherence and cooperation on economic and social issues, among other things. In order to do this, a more efficient and effective United Nations is needed. The United Nations system must deliver solutions to increasingly complicated challenges, be it Iraq, the Middle East, coherence between trade and development, or financing for development. Through their political will, Member States should give the United Nations the support it requires in order for it to be a true actor in world affairs. We need to be more efficient and more result-oriented.

The development and strengthening of the United Nations pose a major challenge at this particular juncture. United Nations structures — the Security Council included — require reform, and the whole Organization requires better resources. This is a prerequisite also for a comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration, which forms a demanding agenda for the United Nations for years to come.

Despite different emphases and definitions given to freedom of action or joint actions, all the prerequisites exist for strengthening multilateral cooperation. As a member of the European Union, Finland is involved in the discussion on the significance of multilateralism and on the terms for promoting global security. This, too, should be one of the main topics in this session of the Assembly.

In addition to what was said in the Italy's statement on behalf of the European Union, I should like to focus on two issues that require multilateral cooperation in particular: the issue of harnessing globalization and that of weapons of mass destruction.

The biggest challenges in the future will be those to international peace and security, which become broader and broader in their scope, and the globalization process, as well as managing these two together through multilateral cooperation.

Globalization affects everyone. Some can benefit from it. Some become more marginalized by it. Globalization stems from a countless number of decisions made in the private sector and beneath or outside public institutions. But we must be able to influence, through the United Nations and other international organizations, corporate and public sector decisions that direct globalization. There are many ongoing processes that try to make globalization more inclusive and allow everybody to share its benefits.

The Finnish Government, together with the Tanzanian Government, is launching the Helsinki Process on globalization and democracy. Ultimately, the global governance pursued by the Helsinki Process is characterized by the democratization of international

relations, by the way that globalization and its by-products can be managed through more equal participation in deciding on international rules and norms. One of the key tasks of the process will be to devise and develop new solutions for global problems. We will also focus on the global economic agenda and on human security.

The international players in globalization include, in addition to States and multinational companies, the continually growing network of non-governmental organizations. Many of those organizations take a critical or negative stand on globalization, but do not hesitate to adopt procedures that are characteristic of globalization or to build networks across national borders. Out of a vast array of organizations, I could name two that are perceived as opposite: the World Economic Forum and the World Social Forum. Both, however, are concerned with the same challenges in the same world. One of the aims of the Helsinki Process is to bring these two processes closer to each other.

A global approach to international peace and security and a multilateral security system based on cooperation are largely axiomatic principles for Finland and for our partners in the European Union. But security problems linked to globalization, and solutions to them, threaten to divide the international community. Peace is much more than the absence of war nowadays. Development and peace are inseparably intertwined, and both of them are being affected by globalization.

Another major issue that requires multilateral cooperation is weapons of mass destruction and prevention of their proliferation.

Effective global governance requires universally agreed norms and rules setting standards for behaviour to be followed by all States as well as by non-State actors. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is clearly an issue that affects the international community as a whole. No State can ignore these dangers. Today more than ever, we need to step up our collective efforts to halt the proliferation worldwide. The most effective way to address global security threats is the multilateral system of binding international agreements. The existing system of treaties, built over the decades, needs to be strengthened, not weakened. We need to reinforce our commitment to the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons and to the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons, with the objective of their total elimination.

Promoting adherence to multilateral treaties and obligations is not enough. It is equally important to ensure that commitments are fully implemented. The international community cannot tolerate precedents of non-compliance with the legal undertakings, which would put at stake the whole non-proliferation regime.

In cases where States have difficulties in implementing treaty obligations due to lack of legal or technical verification expertise, appropriate support and assistance should be offered by the relevant organizations and participating States.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the cornerstone of our efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. In our view, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty constitutes an essential and irreplaceable building block for containing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus contributing to nuclear disarmament. Finland attaches great importance to its entry into force. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

In combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction, new initiatives and new approaches are called for. In order to complement international instruments, we need fresh perspectives on how to confront the problem of weapons of mass destruction. Finland welcomes new efforts, open to all, such as the G-8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

The United Nations and in particular the Security Council have the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Finland is in favour of enhancing the role of the United Nations in issues related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations and the Security Council should look at the enforcement of regimes against weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations has valuable expertise and experience in verification. Finland believes that this verification and inspection competence should be maintained.

By focusing on weapons of mass destruction, I do not want to suggest that small arms are any less dangerous. They need due and growing attention by the international community. In some countries and in

some crises small arms are a means of massive destruction and a major cause of loss of life, mostly of civilians.

The multilateral institutions should respond to new challenges. Being multilateral is not sufficient in itself. In the work of the General Assembly Finland underlines the importance of setting clear priorities, tackling the issues that are most relevant in today's security environment. People throughout the world might find it difficult to understand the Organization's trying to resolve the problems of yesterday's world.

Before concluding, let me express my Government's deep satisfaction with the fact that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has become a reality and is operational. The ICC is the cornerstone of efforts to enhance respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. We remain committed to ensuring the Court's success and appeal to States which have not yet ratified the Rome Statute to become parties to it.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vinci Niel Clodumar, chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Nauru.

**Mr. Clodumar** (Nauru): It gives me great pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Rene Harris, President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nauru, who had to cancel his trip to New York at the last minute due to pressing matters at home. President Harris has asked me to convey to Mr. Julian Hunte warmest congratulations on his assumption of the stewardship of the Assembly. As a small island developing State, Nauru is extremely proud to be associated with the Caribbean Community on Mr. Hunte's marvellous achievement, which gives us hope that we in the Pacific will also have the opportunity to preside over the Assembly.

My delegation would like, through him, to commend His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, for his excellent leadership and the great efforts that he made, particularly in tackling the difficult issues that have plagued the revitalization of the General Assembly as the premier organ of the United Nations. The President has pledged to continue the good work that has been done in these areas, and he can count on Nauru's full cooperation.

Peace and security — or, more correctly, the lack of it — is still the main focus of the United Nations 58 years after its inception. In the past 24 months, we have seen the internationalization of terrorism manifest itself out of a cocktail of hatred, desperation and fanaticism that has spread its tentacles from the Middle East into the international arena. It is unconventional, clandestine, and indiscriminate with respect to its victims. We are also seeing an increase in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction after a period of relative calm, and this is further exacerbating the situation.

The sum of these two nightmarish threats is a cause for concern, and States that feel uniquely vulnerable to terrorist acts are considering the real possibility of terrorists gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. That scenario has forced such States to develop the antidote of unilateral action primed with a pre-emptive strike policy.

We saw it in action in Afghanistan and, six months ago in Iraq, just as President Bush said we would if the Security Council failed to walk the talk of resolution 1441 (2002), which called for the disarmament by Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. Nauru is disappointed that President Bush did not refer in his statement last week to the status of the coalition's search for stockpiles of these weapons, and we are puzzled as to why it is hard to find them when intelligence indicated that the Iraqis could arm and unleash them so as to hit the United Kingdom within 45 minutes.

My delegation considers the antidote to which I referred to be the catalyst in the new wave of nuclear weapons proliferation, and it is not a coincidence that the countries singled out as part of the "axis of evil" are being accused of developing nuclear weapons. Nauru joins the appeal to the countries concerned to observe their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to carry out inspections and verify that nuclear weapons are not being developed.

In all of this, we are certain of one thing: that the major casualty of the current state of affairs is the innocence of the United Nations, which was mortally wounded in Baghdad when the lives of 22 dedicated United Nations servants were lost, including that of the

revered Sergio Vieira de Mello, and more than 100 were injured.

The people of Nauru join the United Nations family in mourning the victims of that tragedy, and our heartfelt condolences go to the bereaved families. That despicable act of terror has cast a shadow over the safety and security of United Nations personnel everywhere. The clarity of its emblem, which stood for tolerance, hope and impartiality and which had acted as a shield against attack, may have been blurred by its subservient role to the administering force in Iraq.

In the light of the facts before us, Nauru fully agrees with the assessment made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in his bold and gutsy statement that the Organization has "come to a fork in the road" and that we are in a moment of time that is "no less decisive than 1945 itself, when the United Nations was founded." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*)

Nauru fully supports the proposal to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to review threats to peace and security and other global challenges insofar as these may influence or be connected with such threats. Nauru strongly believes in multilateralism as a key tool in resolving contemporary problems in all of their complexity.

The Security Council should be at the centre of our collective efforts in maintaining peace and resolving conflict. At the same time, the Council must have at its disposal the means of making evaluations and taking collective action. Most importantly, it must have the will to act quickly and decisively, not only to threats to peace and security, but to genocide and other massive violations of human rights.

Nauru is pleased to see the rapid progression towards making the International Criminal Court operational since its Statute came into force in July 2001. We believe that the objectives of the Court make it a useful addition to the international tool kit for the preservation of peace, as perpetrators of atrocious acts in armed conflict have been put on notice that they will be held accountable for their acts or omissions.

*Mr. Alexandre (Haiti), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

As a small island developing State in the Pacific Ocean, Nauru aligns itself with the statements of the leaders of the Pacific nations who have spoken before me on the concerns and challenges that we, the small-island-big-ocean developing States are facing, now and in the future. Nauru bears all the unique characteristics of a small island State, given our small size, in terms of both land area and population, our remoteness and our vulnerability to exogenous forces, be they man-made or natural.

In 1994, the world community agreed that small island developing States warranted special consideration with regard to their economic and social development because of the unique set of characteristics that are inherent in each island country, and it was to address those unique problems that the Barbados Plan of Action was created.

As His Royal Highness the Prime Minister of Tonga stated in his intervention, the road to sustainable development for small island developing States is posted with signs of undertakings, as we marched from Barbados in 1994 to New York in 1999 for the five-year review, then on to Monterrey in 2002 for the International Conference on Financing for Development, where more signs were posted saying that internal self-help, good governance and trade were the key to poverty alleviation, and that subscription to those cures would provide the way for developed countries to come in and help. Most, if not all, of the small island developing States have been taking this medicine for a long time, and we have yet to see the doctor. In Johannesburg, a whole chapter was devoted to the cause of the small island developing States. In April of this year, the Commission on Sustainable Development paved the way for an international meeting to be held in Mauritius in 2004.

Yet despite all these signs of good intentions, the reality is that, when small island developing States try to see that these decisions or undertakings are reflected in other international forums, our proposals in most cases are either rejected or rendered impotent after intense and difficult negotiations. The Cancún meeting is a good example, as is the recent meeting of Convention bodies such as the Eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in New Delhi in 2002, and the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Havana recently. This undesirable situation needs to be addressed if small island developing States are to benefit from the positive outcomes of international meetings or review conferences.

As we march towards Mauritius, small island developing States will have to endure due process in the Second Committee and at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to establish administrative and financial norms for the international meeting. My delegation suspects that there will be many bumps and detours on the way, but our hope is that, at the end of the road, the outcome will focus on what needs to be done — when and by whom — to overcome impediments in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

It is not sufficient to rely solely on the Barbados Programme of Action to address all the development problems of small island developing States. To that end, Nauru sees the Millennium Development Goals as supplementing the Programme of Action by adding the human development dimension to the scope of issues that should be addressed and by offering partnership to drive the process.

However, for small island States like Nauru, the complex reporting requirement of the Goals is adding to the burden of reports that we are required to prepare, and therefore it is the considered view of my delegation that the United Nations Development Programme should tailor the questionnaire to suit a group of clients rather than use a one-size-fits-all approach. Assistance also should be provided to countries such as Nauru to collect and process the raw data required for the report.

Nauru, like other low-lying small island States, sees the Kyoto Protocol as its salvation from sea-level rise and climate change, which would devastate our already fragile ecological system, which is essential to our livelihood and culture. My delegation understands that the Russian Federation now stands between the Kyoto Protocol's coming into force and its continuing to languish. If that is the case, then Nauru calls on the Russian Federation to do what is universally right and just by ratifying the protocol before the meeting of the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Italy in December this year.

A healthy Pacific Ocean and the sustainable use of its natural resources, including highly migratory fish stocks, are also critical to our livelihood. We in the Pacific have walked the talk on these issues through the development of an ocean policy to guide us in the management of our part of the Pacific Ocean and to form the framework for future regional ocean-related initiatives.

Secondly, we have adopted a Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, which provides a comprehensive regime for the management of the region's highly migratory fish stocks, both in our exclusive economic zone and in the high seas.

The trans-shipment of nuclear waste through our waters is of great concern to many island countries because of the damage it could cause.

My delegation has stated during previous debates that it agrees fully with the proposal to reform the Security Council to bring it into tune with the realities of today's world order. We are disappointed that, after 10 years of debate, there is still no convergence of views between the two camps on how to move forward.

To try to address the expansion along with the question of the veto would be like riding a dead horse — we would not go anywhere, which is exactly the situation we are in.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that we have done all we can do at the representative level, and that the only way we can make progress is to take it to a higher level, so that our political leaders can review what we have done and make a decision on how to move forward.

On the question of reforms to operational policies and administrative structures, including budgetary aspects of the United Nations, my delegation fully supports the actions taken by the Secretary-General in this regard, but it appears that much more has to be done. The areas of review have to be enlarged and intensified, if indeed the prediction that the regular budget is going to exceed the $3 billion mark is correct.

Finally, concerning reform, my delegation fully supports the view expressed by Australia that the group system needs modernization. Most of the Pacific small island countries are buried in the Asian group, which extends from the Pacific Ocean to the Suez Canal, while our big brothers, Australia and New Zealand, are "Others" in the Western European group. Outside the United Nations system, the Pacific is usually grouped with East Asia, in both economic and geopolitical zoning. We see no reason why this cannot be the case

at the United Nations, considering that the divide between Eastern and Western Europe will become meaningless as the two converge.

Nauru, because of biased and incorrect media reports over the last five years, now carries a stigma as a haven for money-laundering through offshore banks registered in Nauru. There have also been reports that our Citizen Investment Programme is aiding and abetting criminals and terrorists, allowing them free movement by making possible the acquisition of Nauruan passports.

The reluctance of foreign authorities to provide proof of allegations of criminal activities by banks registered in Nauru prevented the Government from initiating the mechanism provided for in our legislation to release information on offshore banks to foreign authorities. This has put us on a collision course.

Nauru was not surprised when, in 2000, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) listed it along with others as a non-cooperating country. The following year, Nauru's status was further downgraded, and it was put on the list for "countermeasures" by members of FATF, not because our laws were insufficient, but because the goalposts were shifted and our failure involved a lack of capacity and capability to supervise the offshore banks registered in Nauru.

In December 2002, the United States Government, in taking up FATF's call to apply countermeasures against Nauru, announced that Nauru would be designated a "money-laundering" country under the provisions of the Patriotic Act. The highest level of sanctions would be applied, which would prohibit all commercial and financial transactions between any Nauru-registered financial institution and the United States. In May 2003 Nauru was accordingly informed and was given 30 days to show cause as to why the sanction should not be applied.

Nauru submitted its comments, passed new laws in March of this year repealing the registration of offshore banks, and included a sunset clause terminating the licenses that would come into effect 30 to 180 days — as the case may be — from 27 March 2003, when the law came into force. The Government has also suspended the Citizen Investment Programme while it reviews the law, in order to address the concerns expressed by the United States Department of State.

A new anti-money-laundering law was passed in March, and work is in progress on omnibus legislation that would address the financing of terrorism, transnational organized crime and money-laundering. Nauru also signed an article 98 agreement with the United States.

In the process, Nauru has lost close to $2 million, if not more, in revenue, which is a drop in the ocean to OECD members but real money to us, considering that it is equivalent to 5 per cent of the Government's annual budget. We are now waiting to learn our fate — awaiting the judgement of the United States and the FATF, as the two are interlinked.

To conclude, Nauru, small as it is, believes that power consists in a nation's capacity to link its will with the purpose of others, to lead by reason and give the gift of cooperation.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on Mr. Patrick Albert Lewis, chairman of the delegation of Antigua and Barbuda.

**Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda): It gives me profound pleasure to welcome and congratulate Mr. Julian Hunte in regard to the lofty position that he now holds. It was not long ago that he was fighting alongside the ambassadors of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. He represents the smallest country that has ever ascended to the presidency, and, for his Caribbean colleagues, there will be additional rejoicing when his photograph appears on the Wall of Presidents. It is my hope that our younger diplomats will endeavour to emulate him and continue to demonstrate the mettle of small island developing States. But let me also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Jan Kavan, for the able and skilful manner in which he conducted our deliberations during the fifty-seventh session. The Secretary-General and his staff must also receive acclaim for their diligence and steadfast work. We mourn and grieve for the United Nations staff members killed and wounded in Baghdad, and, indeed, for all members of the staff who have made the ultimate sacrifice in upholding the ideals of the United Nations.

We have often repeated statistics on human living conditions, but it seems to be just a recitation. Nonetheless, in the hope that this year figures may move those in control to make a meaningful attempt at

remedies, let me join the list of other colleagues who have recalled the fact that almost half of the world's population subsists on less than $2 a day, and a fifth lives on less than $1 a day. The point to be stressed is that global inequality has increased. The digital divide is widening, the number of refugees and displaced persons has grown, and the AIDS crisis is devastating numerous societies.

What tends to be ignored is what developing countries have been doing for themselves. In the Caribbean, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries have come to each other's assistance in times of crisis, whether there be natural devastation by way of earthquakes, volcanic eruption, drought or floods. We have used our military forces positively, to rescue, to stabilize and to rehabilitate, when suffering the vicissitudes of nature. Strapped as we are in regard to finances, we have assisted one another in regard to the severest of economic constraints. If an unbiased evaluation is made, it will be clear that average gains in human development in low- and middle-income countries have been substantial and higher than gains in income. Life expectancy has increased by 59 per cent, and illiteracy has been reduced from 39 per cent in 1970 to 25 per cent at the turn of the century.

Nevertheless, current development trends are not sustainable and are placing extreme pressure on the environment and on the impoverished, who bear the overwhelming brunt of environmental degradation. Our coastal systems are threatened, dominant countries are fishing indiscriminately within our exclusive economic zones, and our coral reefs have not only been damaged but are disappearing. Yet aid has declined as a share of gross national product, and World Bank research indicates that, without a doubling of development assistance, the endorsed Millennium Goals are unlikely to be achieved.

Development experts appear to have a single focus. We fully accept the necessity for market reforms, but they are insufficient in themselves. There is a need for broad social reforms. Equitable income distribution and secondary school enrolment have been found to be insensitive to growth, while air quality has been negatively correlated to growth. The global institutions continue to listen to their identified experts and to disregard local experience, whether from the aged and wise or from the young and brilliant. Sustained development requires a significant percentage of domestic or local ownership.

Our religious literature states that continuing a lifestyle demands the depositing or planting of seeds, from which, in a relatively short period of time, comes new life and the continuance of organic existence. With that in mind, it is imperative that development strategies clearly take into consideration those who will succeed us, and Antigua and Barbuda, which devotes much attention and planning to the advancement of its youth, is advocating continued global focus on this issue in order to ensure a more harmonious international atmosphere than the one in which we carry out our activities.

With that in mind, Caribbean heads of State and Government have met with representatives of the World Bank and are jointly in the process of, first, identifying the risk and protective factors and determinants of youth behaviours and development; secondly, demonstrating that the negative behaviours of young people are costly not only to themselves but also to society as a whole; and, thirdly, identifying key intervention points for youth development, underscoring identified risk and protective factors.

Presently, as a result of this joint thrust, we are targeting sexual and physical abuse, HIV/AIDS as linked to misguided values about sexuality, the incidence of rage, youth unemployment, and social misconceptions as to the use of alcohol and marijuana. Moving forward requires modernizing the educational system and maximizing the protective effect of schools, upgrading public health-care systems, making families a top policy issue, and strengthening community and neighbourhood support to adolescents.

Antigua and Barbuda believes that, whereas aid is sorely needed, its effectiveness will be limited unless a level playing field is provided in regard to trade and investment in developing societies. There cannot be meaningful progress by talking about the relative significance and importance of free trade. We listen and see the dominant countries employ various and diverse forms of agricultural protectionism, while taking away from former colonies of exploitation vital preferences needed to keep their products on the market. Why should globalization be oppressive to the pusillanimous? We have been listening to the modifications of the philosophies of Cobden and Bright, but are feeling the yoke of global practices, knowing that never in modern history has there ever been free trade.

The fears of developing countries in regard to the practices and realities of globalization, as opposed to its often-vaunted philosophy, were manifested at Cancún in September of this year. Cancún, we have been made to understand, means snake pit in the local Mayan language, and our hope is that there will be some meaningful effort to overcome the drawbacks. Developing countries will be hindered from developing themselves if lip service alone continues to be paid to poverty. The first step in the elimination of poverty is to adequately recognize the multifunctional role of agriculture. This multifunctional role incorporates food safety, animal welfare and the preservation of land. Unfortunately, Cancún proved once again that the dominant countries would continue to exempt themselves from the rules governing free trade and to domestically provide substantive subsidies to their farmers, while denying the former colonies of exploitation the right to preferences.

The year 2004 will mark the tenth anniversary of the first United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Barbados in 1994. In looking back at the almost 10 years since that Conference, we hold these following truths to be self evident: In the Barbados Programme's attention on the unique circumstances of small island developing States, the corresponding actions to address these circumstances by the international community, has been lacking. This is the opportunity presented by the international meeting, to review the implementation of the Programme of Action that will be held in Mauritius in August 2004. It presents us with a second chance to identify a set of concrete actions which will be needed to further the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and thereby regain the momentum lost by small island developing States in their quest for sustainable development. So far we have not been satisfied that problems relating to the trans-shipment of nuclear waste through our waters, bilging and fishing indiscriminately in our Exclusive Economic Zones have been given any meaningful consideration.

My Government welcomes the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, having recently deposited our instruments of ratification for both the Protocol and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. As a Party to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we wish to lend our support to the call made by the Foreign Minister of Japan for parties to the Climate Change Convention to maintain the international momentum for climate change negotiations, for the early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and for the formulation of common rules that will facilitate participation by all countries.

The Millennium Development Goals constitute an ambitious agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives. The challenge to implement them is enormous. A case in point is the target of halving by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. To meet this target, the world will need to connect approximately 200,000 people to clean water and 400,000 people to improved sanitation each day.

That will require three things: first, innovative financing mechanisms to assure the necessary doubling in financial flows to developing countries for water and sanitation, from current spending of $10 billion each year, to about $20 billion a year; secondly, greatly improved governance of scarce water resources, built around holistic, integrated water resources management strategies that encompass priorities from drinking to agriculture and industrial development; and thirdly, a clear focus on building capacity where it is needed most: working directly with local communities, especially women, to help craft and implement their own solutions. And this is just for water.

We see, as the dominant Powers repeat their call for universal democracy, that the former colonies of exploitation must remind them that democracy is most difficult to achieve among those witnessing the tears and the conditions of hungry children. Democracy struggles to maintain itself among those who are racked with illnesses and weak from the lack of adequate nutrition. Democracy is practically a utopian ideal, in which there are defined class divisions and insurmountable social barriers. For democracy to thrive and prosper, all sectors of the society have to participate fully with regard to economic growth and an adequate distribution of income. It is, therefore, incumbent that society work toward integral, equitable and sustainable social and economic development. In Antigua and Barbuda, in the midst of our trials and tribulations, we have maintained democracy, and it is a hallmark of our existence.

The products of science, technology and innovation have to be harnessed and designed to add value to the real components of development. Wealth must be generated in order to raise the dignity and the esteem of mankind, and to garner respect for the internationally recognized fundamental rights and principles of labour. Without such, socio-economic development and, consequently, the full enjoyment of democracy will be held in abeyance.

My country is at a loss to fully comprehend why some of the major countries of this world oppose the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is vital to our security and development. The Court represents a revolution in legal and moral attitudes toward some of the worst crimes on Earth. Whereas many developing States have suffered under the yoke of globalization, the ICC represents a plus for the globalization process, its principles of justice and the rule of law in international affairs. The Rome Statute has sufficient checks and balances to allay all fears, and we remain convinced that the ICC will be a legitimate judicial institution to adequately judge individuals for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. We reiterate that this can be done while guaranteeing States their rights, as they are protected from any interference by the Court if they pursue the given crimes at the national level, and that the prosecutor's autonomous power is accompanied by guarantees against using the Court for specious or politically motivated endeavours.

The Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean look to Caribbean members of the Special Committee on Decolonization, more commonly known as the Special Committee of 24, to give guidance in regard to their constitutional evolution. This year there was a breakthrough in Anguilla, as the United Kingdom agreed to have the regional seminar held in one of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and for the first time the United Nations Secretariat agreed to write directly to the local representatives, rather than through the representatives of the administering Powers. But more importantly, the United Kingdom sent a senior official from the Commonwealth and Overseas Office, who was to gain the respect of the seminar participants.

The Non-Self-Governing Territories greeted this development, and all sent delegations that were vocal and explained that their options had never been explained to them. They were eager to remain in touch with the United Nations Secretariat, and sought to take advantage of whatever experiences, educational and otherwise, the United Nations could provide. In an atmosphere of cordiality, the administrating Power and the non-self-governing territories expressed ways and means of promoting development and advancement for the territories. Quite significantly the non-self-governing territories hailed the new policy of the United Kingdom for consultation with the elected officials of its territories on the appointment of governors.

My country would not like to give the impression that we are only concerned with development, as this would be far from the truth. We are cognizant of other global issues, particularly with reference to peace and security. The images that are constantly before us with reference to Iraq and the Middle East leave us questioning the brotherhood of mankind. The United Nations has to be unified with reference to the rehabilitation of Iraq, and the transition of its administrative structures into the hands of its nationals.

We subsequently give our support for the peace process in the Middle East, based on the respective resolutions of both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Likewise, we give wholehearted support to the preservation of the role of the United Nations and other organizations in working toward the stabilization and security of Afghanistan.

In the same vein, we support and encourage the efforts made to resolve the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the stabilization of peace in parts of West Africa and the Balkans.

We continue to press for the revitalization of the disarmament process, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and general arms control.

These are indeed perilous times, and, when an event occurs in a distant part of the globe that can drastically affect us domestically, total disregard of the need for tolerance will not only produce resentment but also the dangerous practice of intolerance. For such times it is far better to remember the words of Thomas Paine, who stated that "The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion."

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Clifford Mamba, chairman of the delegation of Swaziland.

**Mr. Mamba** (Swaziland): It is an honour and privilege for me to present my country's statement as

commanded by His Majesty King Mswati III and on his behalf. Allow me to convey the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty King Mswati III and Her Majesty the Indlovukazi and indeed the entire Swazi nation.

We are gathered here to chart the way forward towards the creation of a world fit for all of us by the turn of the century and beyond. Over the past year, we witnessed dramatic events that brought old and new issues to the forefront. The international situation has relapsed into the old state of uncertainty. International leadership, be it on the part of the major Powers or the United Nations, has become vague, as confrontations at the interstate and intra-state levels have increased. Our inability to stand collectively against many issues that afflict each individual country differently has been cited by our detractors as marking the beginning of the end of the Organization and multilateralism.

The United Nations needs to send a clear message to its detractors that it is alive and well, and that it will indeed play a major role in the post-cold war era. All must know that the United Nations is a major forum for consultation, coordination and collective decisions on crucial socio-political issues among its Members and that its strength and relevance has never come from affirming the designs of a few selected Member nations, but instead rests on the collective will of the international community that emerges from a multilateral process.

In our interdependent world, the need to strengthen the multilateral process is now more urgent than ever before, if we are to achieve our common goal of a just and humane international order based on international cooperation and solidarity. This is a challenge that must be squarely and urgently addressed, and remedial action must be taken here at the United Nations. We can stand tall and proud, knowing that two years ago, the response by the United Nations to a new and unprecedented level of terrorism was immediate, united and effective. That response was a model for international unity of purpose and multilateral action; it was a lesson that should not be forgotten as the Organization tackles other problems confronting humanity.

At this point, allow me to pay tribute to Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and to the other United Nations staff and support staff who lost their lives in the terrible tragedy in Baghdad a few weeks ago. Once more, terrorism has shown its ugly face — indeed its only face — and how important it is to support the United Nations efforts to deal with it.

Despite the best intentions and efforts of regional organizations and the United Nations, a scourge of a different nature continues to threaten many parts of the world. I refer here to the threat of internal and inter-State conflicts around the world. Events in some parts of the world continue to be of grave concern to us all. People and countries continue to expend valuable energy and resources in fighting each other. The international community has a responsibility, not only to design appropriate strategies for a measured and early response, but also to find ways and means of addressing those conflicts' root cause and managing them to a peaceful resolution.

There are positive indications that political conflict and turmoil in Africa will be eliminated, and there is hope for building stability and economic progress. In the face of dwindling official development assistance and the lack of comparable resources, the creation of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme are commendable initiatives to bring Africa closer to the mainstream of international development, to generate sustainable economic growth and to eradicate poverty and the spread of disease.

What is needed now are resources and we ask that every effort be made by our developed partners to ensure that these initiatives achieve a breakthrough for African development. Also, the international community should concentrate its efforts toward making development more inclusive and must ensure that particular groups of vulnerable countries, in particular small developing States, are not left out of the global economy and the development process.

With the ongoing revitalization of the General Assembly and its integrated implementation and follow-up to the outcome of major United Nations conferences and summits, we are hopeful that the aspirations of our countries for sustainable development and peace will be met.

The situation in the Middle East continues to be a matter of great concern. We urge both parties to renew their commitment to the road map for peace and to agree on a mechanism for achieving a lasting peace. We are pleased to note that a significant level of

consensus on the main elements of a settlement has emerged. We further urge both parties to take advantage of this and proceed towards negotiations involving the leadership of Palestine and Israel.

It is regrettable that the threat of a nuclear holocaust still haunts us — even to this day — owing to the inability of the international community to work out a regime for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty we have made significant gains on the issue of nuclear disarmament, but these alone cannot eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons. The Kingdom of Swaziland continues to hold the view that the international community must effectively address this matter in order to establish a clear timetable to which all nuclear Powers must commit.

In addition to the struggle to outlaw weapons of mass destruction, there is an urgent need to address the issue of small arms and light weapons, which have contributed to conflict and insecurity in many of our countries. Their easy accessibility, fuelled by illicit brokering, is a major cause for concern. We appeal to all countries to fully implement the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held here in New York in 2001, with a view to combating such practices.

Economic growth is essential if we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the first goal of eradicating poverty. In our quest to develop quietly and peacefully, according to the wishes of the Swazi nation, His Majesty King Mswati III launched, in June this year, the country's first draft constitution — a document that has been hailed by many as a good framework for shaping a new Swaziland. The Constitutional Drafting Committee has taken the draft to the people for their input, and it is our hope that it will be finalized and adopted soon. We are grateful to our international partners for providing support throughout that exercise.

Despite our best efforts, however, the Kingdom of Swaziland is finding it difficult to achieve progress because of the huge obstacles that we face, the greatest of these being the threat to our future by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Its devastating impact on Swaziland has been well documented. No development sector is immune from the consequences of the very high and increasing HIV infection rate among our people, given the enormous strain that it places on our financial and human resources. We are grateful, however, to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and hopes are now high. Notwithstanding the inherent delays in processing our applications to the Fund, the arrival of the first disbursements from the Fund in August has increased hope for thousands among the affected and infected population.

We are now able to embrace the approved medical-care strategies, including the reduction of mother-to-child transmission of the virus and the prescription of antiretroviral drugs for those who need them. The recent high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS, which was held here last week, was of critical importance to Swaziland. We are positive that the conclusions reached during that meeting will be critical in our endeavour to find solutions to this pandemic.

As part of His Majesty's initiative to promote global awareness of the pandemic and to raise funds that will help those of our countries that are suffering from the dreadful consequences of the disease, the much awaited album by international artists, entitled "Songs for Life", was launched by His Majesty here at the United Nations, in Washington and in Los Angeles in June this year. We look forward with great confidence to the success of the album, whose proceeds will go entirely to HIV/AIDS programmes.

The food security situation that continues to affect the Southern African region is closely linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Kingdom of Swaziland has been hard hit by food shortages, largely due to the failure of the rains, particularly in the rural areas, where communities are entirely dependent on farming. As food shortages grip us tighter, we are grateful to the United Nations and its affiliated agencies for their effort to help us to arrest the crisis. As we approach this farming season, it is our prayer that the situation will improve.

It could be safely said that the twenty-first century has had an inauspicious start, with globalization, terrorism, disease and weapons of mass destruction at the forefront of our minds. This places all the more responsibility on the United Nations to harness the resources and commitment of its Members for the benefit of humankind. In this effort, there is a compelling need to include all the peoples of the world,

as envisaged by our founding fathers and as enshrined in the principle of universality. Acknowledging the importance of this principle, the Kingdom of Swaziland raises the issue of the inclusion once more of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the activities of the United Nations and its associated agencies. Our principled position on this important issue remains unchanged.

The Republic of China on Taiwan has shown time and again its willingness to participate in efforts to bring about true global peace, development and security, as well as its commitment to utilize resources for the benefit of mankind. We therefore fail to understand why the people of Taiwan cannot be part of this great family of nations.

Finally, I would like to thank the President of the Assembly for giving me this opportunity to speak before the Assembly. The Kingdom of Swaziland reiterates its conviction that the United Nations system remains the best guarantee for international peace and security. We pledge to work vigorously with the Organization to ensure its success.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*